

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) A method for protecting a surface of a porous ceramic body, comprising the steps of:

applying to the surface a slurry composition comprising:

a binding agent;

a ceramic material different from the material of the ceramic body;

at least one boron containing compound;

solvent; and

impregnating the slurry into the pores of the ceramic body.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the binding agent comprises silica particles.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the solvent comprises water.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the ceramic material comprises cordierite.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

drying the slurry in the pores of the ceramic body; and

firing the dried slurry in the pores.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the ceramic body is provided in the form of a tile.

15-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) A method of protecting a surface of a ceramic body comprising applying to the surface a slurry composition, wherein the slurry comprises solids and a solvent, wherein the solids comprise:

- a binding agent;
- ~~a ceramic material~~ cordierite; and
- at least one boron-containing compound.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 20, wherein the solvent comprises water.

23. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 20, wherein the boron compound is selected from the group consisting of boron carbide, boron butoxide, boron nitride, boron nitrate, and mixtures thereof.

24. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 20, wherein the solids have an average particle size of less than about 2.0 micrometers.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Unchanged) A method for producing a surface protected ceramic body, comprising:
impregnating a slurry into the pores of a ceramic body; and
drying the slurry in the pores of the ceramic body to produce the surface protected ceramic body;

wherein the slurry comprises a boron-containing compound and further comprises a binding agent, a ceramic material different from the material of the ceramic body, and a solvent, wherein the surface protected ceramic body can be heated to 2500 °F for 20 hours without cracking.

27. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 26, wherein the binding agent comprises silica and the solvent comprises water.

28. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 26, wherein the ceramic material comprises cordierite.

29. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 26, further comprising firing the dried slurry in the pores.

30. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 26, wherein the drying step comprises directing a surface heating source against the surface of the ceramic body.

31. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 26, wherein the drying step comprises heating the entire ceramic body.

32. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 29, wherein the firing step comprises directing a surface heating source against the surface.

33. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein the firing ~~source~~ step comprises heating the entire ceramic body.